



Universal Acceptance Day Uruguay - May 26, 2025

Contribution of UASG, its challenge and way ahead

Anil Kumar – UASG Chairman, ICANN

Opening and Acknowledgments

- Anil Kumar welcomed attendees and expressed gratitude to ISOC Uruguay.
- He acknowledged Rodrigo (previous speaker) for introducing the concept of Universal Acceptance (UA) in Spanish.

The Linguistic and Digital Divide

- **Global Language Landscape:**
 - Over **7,000 spoken languages** and **20,000 dialects** worldwide.
 - **53% of the world's population** does not speak English.
- **Digital Inequality:**

- Of 5.5 billion internet users, **2.6 billion are unconnected**.
 - Most unconnected users are in **Asia-Pacific and Africa**.
 - The next **1 billion users** will likely come from **non-English-speaking populations**.
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Understanding Universal Acceptance (UA)

- **Definition:** UA ensures that all **domain names** and **email addresses**, regardless of script, language, or length, are **accepted and function properly** across all internet-enabled systems.
 - **Technical Challenges:**
 - **Newer TLDs:** Domains longer than 3 characters (e.g., .site) may not be recognized.
 - **Non-ASCII domains:** Domains in local scripts (e.g., Chinese, Arabic) often not accepted.
 - **Right-to-left scripts** (like Arabic, Urdu) complicate rendering and validation.
 - **ICANN's Role:**
 - Started **IDN delegation in 2003**.
 - Formed the **UASG (Universal Acceptance Steering Group)** in **2015** to lead UA implementation efforts.
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UASG's Achievements (2015–2025)

- **Structural Work:**
 - 6 working groups
 - 650+ hours of collaboration
- **Outreach & Resources:**
 - 25 videos
 - 80+ blogs
 - 100+ localized URAD websites
 - 50+ technical documents (guidance, testing, gap analysis)
- **Technical Tools Provided:**
 - Free **code samples**
 - **Self-hosted testing tools**
 - **AI-based UA testing systems**

- **Global Impact:**
 - **UA Day launched in 2023**
 - **167 events held globally** reaching over **21,300 participants** in 3 years
 - Celebration continues through **end of May 2025**
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Adoption Progress and Statistics

- **Domain Name System (DNS):**
 - 150+ top-level domains now IDNs
 - 4 million IDN second-level domains
 - **Web and Email Systems:**
 - 14% of websites support UA
 - 27% of email systems are UA-ready (EAI compliant) to some extent
 - **Implication:** 86% of websites and ~73% of emails are **not yet UA-compliant**
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Technology Ecosystem Involvement

- UA must be adopted across the **entire digital stack**, including:
 - Applications and websites
 - Social media and search engines
 - Programming languages and frameworks
 - Operating systems and developer tools
 - **Ongoing Website Evaluation:**
 - 2,000 websites surveyed: 1,000 country-specific, 1,000 global
 - Example: Brazil used as a case study
 - Some global websites showed **96–99% compliance**
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The Business Case for UA

- **Market Opportunity:**
 - 2017 study showed a **\$9.8B+ opportunity** if systems become UA-ready

- Updated ICANN study (in progress) projects the market could exceed **\$100B**
 - **Advantages for Companies:**
 - Reach **underserved markets** (non-English speakers)
 - Improve **accessibility and inclusivity**
 - Gain **competitive edge**
 - Fulfill **social responsibility**
 - Build **internal capacity and skills**
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Case Example: India

- Government websites now available in **English and Hindi**
 - Resulted in wider access to **government services** by local language speakers
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Challenges and Gaps

1. **Awareness Deficit:**
 - Many stakeholders unaware of UA or its practical solutions
 2. **Fragmented Adoption:**
 - Large companies can afford UA transition
 - Small businesses often left behind, resulting in **inconsistent user experiences**
 3. **Education System Lag:**
 - **Internet governance and UA not widely taught**
 - Lack of awareness among future developers and policy leaders
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Strategic Focus Areas

1. **Government Engagement:**
 - Governments influence large populations
 - Should **include UA requirements in procurement**
 - Examples: **China has adopted; India is piloting** such mandates
2. **Big Tech Participation:**

- Companies like Apple, Google, Facebook must adopt UA in **long-term planning**
 - 3. **DNS Industry Readiness:**
 - Registries (TLDs, ccTLDs, gTLDs), registrars, and backend providers must implement UA
 - ICANN has converted most of its own systems to UA standards
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Call to Action

- **Businesses:** Audit your systems. Use UASG tools to become UA-ready.
 - **Governments:** Mandate UA in procurements; spread awareness.
 - **Organizations:** Partner with UASG to upgrade standards.
 - **Academia:** Adopt UASG's **UA curriculum**. Pilots ongoing in Bahrain, India, and other countries.
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Closing

- Kumar urged everyone to:
 - Explore **universalacceptance.day** for UA events and resources
 - Continue promoting and implementing UA standards
 - Prepare for a **multilingual, inclusive future of the Internet**